BX
7232
.R6

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. BX7232

Shelf .R6

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



# A MANUAL

OF THE

# Principles, Doctrines & Usages

OF

## CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

COMPILED BY

REV. J. E. ROY.

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces: that ye may tell it to the generation following."—PSALM xlviii: 12, 13.

THIRD EDITION.

CHICAGO:

CHURCH, GOODMAN & DONNELLEY, PRINTERS.

1869.

# CONTENTS.


| | PAGE. |
|---|---|
| Historical Sketch of Congregationalism | 3 |
| Principles of Congregationalism | 5 |
| National Council at Boston | 16 |
| Genius of Congregationalism | 19 |
| How to form a Church | 21 |
| Confession of Faith | 26 |
| Covenant | 28 |
| Parliamentary Rules | 32 |
| Forms of Letters Missive | 34 |
| How to Incorporate a Church | 36 |
| Advantages of Congregationalism | 45 |

# A MANUAL

OF THE

# Principles, Doctrines and Usages

OF

# CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

COMPILED BY

REV. J. E. ROY.

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following."—PSALM xlviii. 12, 13.

CHICAGO:
CHURCH, GOODMAN AND DONNELLEY, PRINTERS.
1869.

BX7232
.R6

[The matter of this Manual "hath so much force as there is force in the reason of it." In organizing Churches at the West, often among people who know nothing of the genius of Congregationalism, the need of some simple Directory how to proceed, has been greatly felt. For want of some such help not a few Churches have been organized without any code of rules, and so have been subject to many distractions, while the polity has thereby suffered reproach. The late Council at Washington "learned with great surprise and regret that no such code had been adopted by that Church;" and, finding this lack a cause of "much of the confusion and irregularity" there discovered, made "one of its most earnest recommendations that this great defect, always certain to be fruitful of mischief, be at once and carefully supplied."]

# CONGREGATIONAL MANUAL.

## I. HISTORICAL SKETCH OF CONGREGATIONALISM.*

THOU shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee.—Deut. viii. 2.

BUT a superficial examination of the New Testament is needed to show us what principles of polity were adopted by the Apostles in the organization of the Primitive Churches. Under the guidance of the Spirit of God, and following the principles laid down by Christ in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, they adopted that mode of government which, for want of a better name, is now called Congregationalism. The name is simply a suggestion of the fact, that the *congregation possesses all the governing power.* The apostles invariably addressed each congregation of Christians as though it was the only Church in the place, and when they referred to the churches of any given territory, they always used the plural number, as "the Churches of Galatia," Macedonia, etc. The bishops, or teachers, or elders, were each the minister of one Church, except in cases of a large Church, where several men were associated, as "the elders of Ephesus," to whom Paul gave the name of bishops. Mosheim, who was a Lutheran, and whose work on ecclesiastical history is of high authority, says, vol. i., p. 86, "The highest authority was in the people, or the whole body of Christians in the Apostolic Churches, for even the Apostles themselves inculcated by their example, that nothing of any moment was to be done, or determined on, but with the knowledge and consent of the brotherhood. The assembled people, therefore, elected their own rulers and teachers, or by their authoritative consent, received them when recommended to them. They also by their suffrages rejected or confirmed the laws that were proposed by their rulers in their assemblies; they excluded profligate or lapsed brethren, and restored them; they decided the controversies and disputes that arose; in a word, the people did every thing that is

* From the Missouri Manual.

proper for those in whom the supreme power is vested. Acts i. 15-26; Acts vi. 3-6; 2 Cor. viii. 19; Acts xviii. 17; 1 Cor. v. 4, 13; 2 Cor. ii. 6." Also, on same page, he says—"For all the Churches in these primitive times were independent bodies; none of them were subject to the jurisdiction of any other." This he also affirms was the case with all the Churches during a great part of the second century, on p. 142, vol. 1.

Neander, another high authority in Church history, testifies to the same. In the latter half of the second century, when the fervor of apostolic piety had begun to disappear, there arose unchristian dissensions among the clergy, and Jerome suggests that the idea of a standing officer called a bishop, was resorted to as an expedient to quell them. The progress towards a hierarch was rapid. Ecclesiastical officers were multiplied. Men ambitious to acquire power made use of their sacred office to secure increased authority, and the order of the church was soon changed from the simple democracy of the Apostles into the oppressive abominations of the Papacy.

"Neighboring churches were first consolidated into one bishopric, then aggregated bishoprics grew into a vast hierarchy, which overcame all popular resistance and settled itself securely for centuries at Rome giving birth there to those monstrous and malignant heresies of doctrine, and those mournful and miserable immoralities of life, which, raying out gloom upon the general mind and heart, brought on the long night of the dark ages."—[Congregationalism, by H. M. Dexter, D.D., p. 22.]

A little band known as the Waldenses in the valleys of the Cottian Alps, successfully resisted this invasion of Papal corruption, maintaining their position against all persecution. This forms the only link between the Apostolic time and the Reformation.

This New Testament order of Church government was reproduced by the Puritans, who, by the corruptions of their times were driven back to the Word of God for their principles and their models. The first Congregational Church after the Reformation was formed in 1606, in Scrooby, in the north of England, where a few Christians, hunted by the hounds of the Establishment, took refuge. That Church emigrated to Amsterdam, in Holland, John Robinson being its pastor. After a year it removed to Leyden, where it remained for eleven years. In 1620 one division of this Church came to America, and landed from the *Mayflower* on Plymouth Rock, Dec. 22, 1620. This was the first church of this, or any other order in America,

except, perhaps, one or two small Episcopal organizations in Eastern Virginia. More than eighty years after this the first Presbyterian church in this country was organized at Philadelphia, and seventy years still later, the first Methodist Church was formed in New York city.

The Churches of New England are largely Congregational. Out of New England there are 1,762 churches of this order, and in all the former free states and territories they are rapidly increasing in number and in membership; and, now that slavery, their natural antagonist, is gone, they are springing up at the South. With the exception of two denominations, it has the highest number of Churches and the largest membership of any Protestant sect in the United States. It supports, under the American Board, more than a hundred missionaries in foreign lands, and under the American Home Missionary Society, more than nine hundred missionaries in the new and destitute parts of our own country. Under its Congregational Union, within fifteen years, it has aided in building 496 houses of worship for feeble churches. In January, 1869, it had 2,951 churches, 3,070 ministers, 291,042 members, 7 theological seminaries, 14 colleges, and many academies of the higher class.

---

## II. PRINCIPLES OF CONGREGATIONALISM.*

What the Spirit saith, it sayeth unto the Churches.—Rev. ii. 7.

I. Officers.—Congregational Churches have two perpetual and regularly elected classes of officers. These are Bishops (usually styled Pastors), and Deacons. Frequently, however, Committees are appointed, either annually or occasionally, for such purposes of mere business, as the exigencies of the case may require.

Ordinarily each Church has but *one* Bishop or Pastor, though some Churches have two colleague Pastors. Many years since it was common for each Church to enjoy the labors of two (called Pastor and Teacher), and the primitive Churches appear to have had several, composing a Ministerial Elderhood, or Presbytery, *in* (*not over*) each Church; Acts xiv. 23; Titus i. 5; 1 Timothy iv. 14; James v. 14;

* A tract of the Congregational Board, expanded by Dr. Wm. W. Patton, in the Manual of the First Congregational Church, Chicago.

but in modern times, with the change in the circumstances of the Churches, and in the character of the public instruction given, the custom has been abandoned.

The number of Deacons appointed by each Church, may be two or more, two being the smallest number used.

The primitive Churches, founded by the Apostles, had these same officers, and no others. Those called "Elders" were the same as "Bishops." Compare Acts xx. 17, 28; 1 Peter v. 1-5; Titus i. 5-7. See also Neander's Church History, vol. i., p. 184, and Mosheim's Ecc. History, vol. i., p. 69. Thus, Paul, writing to the Philippians, directs his letters to "the saints at Philippi, with the *Bishops and Deacons.*" Phil. i. 1. It is evident, therefore, that in the single Church in that city were at least *two Bishops.* In the Church at Ephesus, also, were *several Bishops;* for Paul having invited the *Elders* of the Church at Ephesus to meet him at Miletus, Acts xx. 17, styles those very individuals, verse 28, *Bishops.* Our translators give the word "overseers;" but the word in the original language is Bishops, and is so rendered in every other text. As there were several of these in each of the primitive Churches, they divided out the various duties among them, according to their natural and spiritual gifts; and some attended more to public preaching, and others more to pastoral oversight, as appears from 1 Tim. v. 17; but *all* were *equal in office* and *were ministers.* There were not two *kinds* of elders, the one ministers and the other laymen. The New Testament knows nothing of "ruling elders," who have no *official right* to teach. Therefore Paul addresses his epistles, in each case, to the "bishops and deacons" of the Church, there being no other officers.

II. Powers and Duties of Officers. — Congregational Churches entrust *no ecclesiastical power* to their officers. In all business meetings of the Church, the Bishop or Pastor is *ex-officio* moderator. This constitutes the only distinction or power he possesses, above any other brother in the Church. The New Testament denies to the officers authority of any original or exclusive character, and represents them rather as the *servants* of the Churches. Matt. xx. 25, 27.

The *duties* connected with this office are numerous and important. *Teaching* is the great duty of the Pastor. He is expected, therefore, to be a habitual and diligent student; to preach on the Sabbath; to visit his flock from house to house; to collect portions of his congregation in smaller meetings for religious instruction; to visit the sick;

and to perform religious services at funerals. He is also to administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, at such times as the Church may appoint.

In these respects, also, Congregational Churches have copied the primitive model. We find little or nothing in the Scriptures of the *power* of Bishops or Teachers. What is said in Hebrews xiii. 7, 17, relates to the respect and deference which should be paid to religious teachers who are competent and faithful in their office, and who preside in the assemblies of believers, guide their minds, exercise a moral power and leading influence, and execute the discipline ordered by the Church. Thus, Neander remarks, in his Church History, vol. i., p. 189:

"As regards the relation in which these Presbyters (Elders or Pastors) stood to the communities, they were not designed to exercise absolute authority, but to act as presiding officers and guides of an ecclesiastical republic; to conduct all things with the co-operation of the communities, as their ministers and not as their masters."

The great duty of the primitive, *scriptural Bishop* was *to teach.* As the passages which relate to this subject are too numerous and too long to be quoted in this brief manual, let the reader refer to Acts xx. 28; 1 Tim. iii. 1-6; iv. 6; iv. 12-16; 2 Tim. ii. 1-26; iv. 1-5; Titus i. 7-9; ii. 1-15; iii. 1-11.

The duties of *Deacons* in our Congregational Churches are quite limited. They assist in administering the Lord's Supper, by distributing the elements to the communicants. It is their duty also to attend to the secular business of the Church; to visit the members for the purpose of religious instruction and prayer; to conduct the religious meetings in the absence of the Pastor or other minister, and to attend to the wants of the poor.

Very little is said in the Scriptures respecting the office of Deacons. Their character, though not their duties, are described in 1 Tim. iii. 8-12. The original word signifies *one who serves, or assists.* From that fact and from the testimony of history, there can be no doubt that their duties consisted in general, in acting as assistants or aids to the Bishop, in discharging his duties to the Church. Thus Neander says, in his Church History, vol. i., p. 188:

"Besides these, we find only one other Church office in the Apostolic age, that of the Deacons. The duties of this office were from the beginning, simply external, as it was instituted in the first place,

according to Acts vi., to assist in the distribution of alms. The care of providing for the poor and sick of the communities, to which many other external duties were afterwards added, devolved particularly on this office."

III. Power of the Church.—It is a fundamental principle of Congregationalism that *all ecclesiastical power resides in the Church*, or the associated body of the brethren, and not in the officers of the Church, nor in ecclesiastical bodies distinct from or above the Church. The power exercised by the Church is purely *ecclesiastical*, without touching in the slightest degree the temporal or civil rights of its members, or of any other person. The principal powers exercised by the Church may be classified as follows:

1st. *The power of electing its own officers.*—The Bishop (or Pastor) and Deacons, are elected by a majority of the Church. In exercising this power, it is considered obligatory on the members to exercise mutual forbearance in case of any difference of opinion; that a majority should give great weight to the opposing wishes of a minority; and that a minority should be willing to surrender their own predilections in deference to a majority. Thus may harmony be secured.

2d. *The power of admitting or excluding its own members.*—Persons are admitted to the Church by vote of the brethren; unworthy members are also excluded by the same power. The modes of proceeding in these cases will be described hereafter.

3rd. *The power of forming its own creed.*—Congregational Churches have no denominational Creed; that is, no Creed received as authoritative by all the Pastors and Churches, or imposed on them by any ecclesiastical authority. It is true that they all receive, unhesitatingly, the fundamental or evangelical doctrines. Still, *each Church constructs its own Creed;* and alters it whenever inclined. It is worthy of notice, as showing the unity of the teaching of the Spirit, and the safety of trusting the local Churches, that although hundreds, and perhaps thousands of creeds have been constructed by our Churches, and the phraseology used is endlessly varied, yet there is the most wonderful harmony, and even identity of doctrine among them all, on the essential truths of religion.

4th. *The power of regulating the details of its own worship, and modes of procedure in executing the previous powers.*—The mode in which public worship shall be performed; the seasons for communion; the mode of receiving or disciplining its own members;

special seasons of fasting and religious worship, are all regulated by vote of the Church.

5th. *The power of independency.*—That is, each Church has these powers, in and of itself, which it may exercise without responsibility to any ecclesiastical authority above itself. Its votes on all these points are decisive and final. No ecclesiastical power can impose on any Church, a religious teacher, or other officer; or admit or exclude members; or form their creed; or regulate their modes of proceeding. Each Church has the exclusive right of managing its own concerns.

It is true that Congregational Churches live in close fraternal union, are associated together in bodies, and often ask and receive advice and help from each other; but all this is the result of mutual confidence and affection, not of any superior power. These principles also, are in accordance with the scriptural model. For it is certain, that no text can be produced in which God assigns power over the Churches to any individual, or set of individuals. It is to be taken for granted, therefore, that no such power exists. The New Testament speaks of no organization above the local Church. It always uses the word "Church" to mean either the general company of the redeemed, or the congregation of professed believers in a particular place. The word never occurs in the sense of an external, centralized organization, embracing and ruling a multitude of congregations, as when we hear men say, "The Presbyterian Church," or "The Episcopal Church." There is no such thing as "The Congregational Church of the United States," but "The Congregational Churches," etc. Thus we read of "the Churches of Judea," Gal. i. 22, "the Churches of Macedonia," 2 Cor. viii. 1, and "the Churches of Asia," 1 Cor. xvi. 19, the Churches being separate and independent.

But there are various passages, which fully indicate the possession of all the powers above named, in the primitive Churches. The election of officers by the people was evidently a law of the Christian Church, from the time of its commencement. Even *the designation of an apostle* to fill a vacancy, Acts i. 15-26, was made by the assembled brethren. The Church at Jerusalem chose the seven persons, who were to exercise the office of Deacon. Acts vi. 3-5. In Matthew xviii. 15-17, the Church, and that alone, is expressly charged with the duty of exercising discipline. The Church at Corinth were directed by Paul to exercise discipline; 1 Cor. v. 1-7; vi. 1-5. The

command to exercise discipline is repeated in 1 Cor. v. 11, 13. The Church of Corinth actually exercised this power, as may be seen by 2 Cor. ii. 6-10, where the censure is said to have been "inflicted by many." And Elders (or Bishops, for the two are synonymous) are forbidden to be lords over God's heritage; 1 Peter v. 3. Ecclesiastical History also gives the same account of the primitive Churches. Numerous citations are excluded from this little manual. Two out of multitudes must suffice. Mosheim (who was not a Congregationalist) says, Ecc. History, vol. i., p. 68:

"The assembled people, therefore, elected their own rulers and teachers, or by their free consent received such as were nominated to them. They also, by their suffrages, rejected or confirmed the laws that were proposed by their rulers in their assemblies; they excluded profligate and lapsed brethren, and restored them; they decided the controversies and disputes that arose; they heard and determined the causes of Presbyters and Deacons; in a word, the people did every thing that is proper for those in whom the *supreme power* is vested."

Mosheim says again, Hist. Com., vol. i., p. 196:

"Although all the Churches were, in this first age of Christianity, united together in one common bond of faith and love, and were in every respect ready to promote the interests and welfare of each other by a reciprocal interchange of good offices, yet with regard to government and internal economy, every individual Church considered itself as an independent community, none of them ever looking in these respects beyond the circle of its own members for assistance, or recognizing any sort of external influence or authority."

Congregationalism is true republicanism. Each Congregational Church and Society, elects its own officers, owns its own house and property, judges of the qualifications of its own members, allows to each brother an equal vote, and has no superior, lord, or overseer. Congregational Churches, then, are truly apostolic and primitive, in assigning all ecclesiastical power to the Church, and not to the officers of the Church.

It is worthy of remark, also, that the principles on which Congregational Churches are organized, being thus purely republican, are in entire harmony with the principles of our civil government, and had much to do with its origin. The people of the United States are, under God, the source of civil power; appoint their own magistrates and rulers, who are usually elected for a brief term of office, so

that every few years fresh power may be derived from the people; and thus, in effect, construct their own laws. If the interests and relations of the State were as few and simple as those of the Church, independent town or city organizations would be all that civil governments would need, and even now a large part of public business is left to their sole management. To the influence of this feature of Congregationalism, history gives the most gratifying testimony. Even Hume, bitterly as he hated them, declares, "that to this sect [Puritans] the English owe the whole freedom of their Constitution." Lord Brougham says of them, "A body of men may be held in everlasting remembrance for the unshaken fortitude with which at all times they have maintained their attachment to civil liberty; men to whose ancestors, England will ever acknowledge a boundless debt of gratitude as long as freedom is prized among us." In our own country the ecclesiastical principles and practices of the Puritan settlers of New England are known to have shaped their political institutions, and these in time affected our national Constitution. De Tocqueville traces our whole form of government back to the New England town meeting, which was the mere copy of the Church meeting. So also it is a fact, that Thomas Jefferson, who had so much to do with the forming of our institutions, attended occasionally the meetings of a Church near his residence that was conducted on Congregational principles, and remarked, that he had been much interested in that form of government; that it was the only form of pure democracy in the world; and that he thought it would be the best plan of government for the American colonies. (See Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge, article, Congregationalists.)

IV. Ecclesiastical Bodies. — Although the Scriptures give to no men, or set of men, power over the Churches, yet they allow them to associate together for practical religious purposes, which may seem desirable, but which do not conflict with their independence.

*Associations* are composed of Pastors, or of Pastors and delegates. They meet for prayer and mutual counsel; they examine and approbate those who may wish to enter the ministry, and they make useful suggestions to the Churches.

*The General Association* of each State at the East is usually composed of delegates from the smaller Associations; but in the West, embraces all the Pastors, and a delegate from each Church. This

body meets annually; hears reports on the state of religion; and offers advice to the Churches on matters connected with the concerns of benevolence, sound doctrine and religious duty. It is to be particularly noted, that these bodies possess *no ecclesiastical power*, like the superior judicatories or higher bodies of the Romish Church, and of some Protestant denominations. They are simply advisory. The Churches, if they choose, may manage their own concerns, without reference to them. Still, so much confidence is reposed by the Churches, in the character, education and piety of their brethren, that great weight is voluntarily and cheerfully given to their opinions, and great assistance is derived from their counsels.

V. Ecclesiastical Councils.—When matters of peculiar importance or difficulty come before a Church, it avails itself of the *advice* of other Churches. Thus, when a Pastor is to be installed, the Church sends to a number of the neighboring Churches an invitation, called a "letter missive," to be present at a certain time by their Pastor and delegate, to form an Ecclesiastical Council, to examine the proposed Pastor, and to act in behalf of the Church in the exercises of installation, if they see no valid objection. And so, when a Pastor is dismissed, the Church calls a council to advise and act for it in the emergency, and to give the minister a parting letter of recommendation.

If a member who has been disciplined, thinks that injustice has been done, and particularly if the vote of the Church was divided, it is usual to call a mutual council, chosen half by each party, to revise the case, and to give their opinion or advice to the Church. In this advice both parties generally concur, though the Church is not compelled to follow it when adverse to its own judgment. If the Church should not concur in the result, a copy of the opinion of the council would be a sufficient letter of recommendation for the aggrieved person with which to unite with another Church. If the Church refuse to unite with the complainant in calling a mutual council, he may summon an *ex parte* council of such Churches as he may please, and if that council justify him, he may use their result as a letter of recommendation in applying to another Church.

No council can act on any matter not mentioned in the letter missive, nor remain in existence after adjournment at the close of that business; neither has it power to add to or diminish its number, directly, or indirectly. There is a manifest impropriety even in inviting others to sit as corresponding members. A board of arbitrators

have nothing to do with corresponding members. The idea is absurd.

VI. Conditions of Admission to the Church. — It is the unanimous opinion of the Congregational Churches, that credible evidence of piety is a necessary pre-requisite to communion and Church membership. It is by no means maintained, that entire assurance of salvation should be required, or perfect agreement in the details of doctrine. But as the Church was designed to embrace only true Christians, it follows, of course, that credible evidence of being a Christian, including belief of the fundamental doctrines of the Bible, should be the condition of membership.

This part of our system, also, is in accordance with Divine and Apostolic example. For we are informed, Acts ii. 47, "that the Lord added to the Church daily, such as should be saved," while Phillip required of the Cunuch before baptism, a statement of his belief as to Christ, Acts viii. 37. The Apostolic epistles addressed to the Churches, are inscribed "to the saints," "to the faithful," to the "believers in Christ," with other similar epithets; and they were required to exclude those who lived in sin, or who denied the faith; 1 Cor. v. 11-13; 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14; 1 Tim. i. 19, 20; vi. 3-5; Titus iii. 10; 2 Peter ii. 1-3; thus showing that the Churches were to be made up of true Christians.

VII. Of the name Congregationalism.—The names of all sects are of modern origin. The terms, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, and Congregational, were alike unknown in ancient times. Then, the disciples of Christ were simply styled Christians, or the Christian Church. But in process of time, as differences of opinion arose respecting the doctrines or organization of the Church, it became necessary to distinguish those respective differences by some name. The names now in use were consequently adopted.

The term Congregational was applied to our Churches from the fact, that all ecclesiastical power resides in the *congregated* body or members of the Church, that is, in the congregation or *brotherhood*, and *not in the officers*. This distinguishes us from some other denominations, who confide power to the officers of the Church. It may be well to remark, however, that the Baptists are in reality Congregationalists; differing from us only in regard to the mode and subject of Baptism, and the extent of communion with other Christians.

VIII. Differences from other Denominations.—Congregationalists differ from *Presbyterians* principally in Church government, which, however, has much to do with the Christian education of the members, the training of the ministry, and the characteristic spirit of the denomination. The equal participation of all the members in the government of a Congregational Church, by interesting them in its affairs, and by imposing personal responsibility, necessarily makes them intelligent, active and independent Christians. So also the ministers, being accountable simply to their Churches, and having no denominational Creed authoritatively imposed upon them as a test of orthodoxy, but being expected to state their views of Bible doctrine in their own language, are trained in free thought on all subjects, and become not only able theologians but also bold and faithful preachers of the Word. The spirit of the denomination is therefore liberal and progressive. Presbyterian Churches have each a body of lay Elders elected for life, who, with the Pastor, compose the "Session," and by them is the government of the Church exercised, members being received or excluded by their vote alone. Over the Session is the Presbytery, composed of the Pastors of the Churches in a certain district, and an Elder from each Church, *appointed by the Session.* The Presbytery has power to control the Sessions and reverse their proceedings, and no Pastor can be called and settled without their permission. Over the Presbytery is the Synod, composed of several Presbyteries, and above the Synod is the General Assembly, formed by delegates from all the Presbyteries in the land. These delegates are appointed by the Presbyteries, and are *always Ministers or Elders.* A case of discipline may be carried up successively through all the judicatories to the General Assembly, involving four trials, a vast loss of time to all concerned, and great trouble and expense in the attendance of the parties and witnesses at distant points. The people have no voice in the system, except when the Elder is first elected for an unlimited term. No warrant can be found in Scripture for these authoritative judicatories outside of and above the local Church. Presbyterianism is thus an aristocratic rather than a truly republican system; all the bodies above the Session representing officers and not the people, and even the Session very remotely representing the people.

Congregationalists differ from *Baptists* with regard to Baptism and Church communion. Baptists hold that immersion alone is Baptism, that none but adult believers should be baptized, and that none but

immersed professors should be admitted to the Lord's Table; while Congregationalists admit the validity of any Baptism in which water is applied to the person in the name of the Trinity, hold that Baptism should also be given to the infant children of believers, and welcome to the Lord's Table all Evangelical Christians.

Congregationalists differ from *Methodists* both in doctrine and in Church government, the latter being Arminian in theology, and governing their Churches by Bishops and Conferences, who own all the property and appoint and remove the ministers. John Wesley himself said of the Methodists, "We are no republicans, and never intend to be."

Congregationalists differ from *Episcopalians* in ceremonies of worship, and in Church government. The Episcopalians use a liturgy in worship, hold to three orders in the ministry, and confide the admission and exclusion of members to the Pastor and the Diocesan Bishop, who is set over the Churches and Ministers of a particular district, and alone has power to confirm members, and ordain Ministers. Among Congregationalists every Pastor is a Bishop, as among the New Testament Churches, and all Ministers are equal in office.

IX. Intercourse with other Denominations.—Congregationalism, desiring to be free from any narrow sectarianism, insists upon no denominational peculiarities as the condition of fellowship. This principle is carried out in our intercourse with other denominations. At their seasons of communion, Congregational Churches invite those present, who are members, in regular standing, of *any Evangelical denomination*, and who are honoring their profession by a godly life, to sit down with them at the Table of the Lord. If any of their members wish to unite with Churches of other denominations, letters are given to such Churches; or if any come from other denominations, and there be no evidence against their Christian character, they are received as from sister Churches. Though preferring, on Scripture grounds, as they think, the organization and principles of their own Churches, Congregationalists still recognize, with fraternal fellowship, as true Churches of Christ, "all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." By this course, they think that they act in accordance with those numerous injunctions to charity, unity, and peace, which are so numerous in the Apostolic writings.

X. CONGREGATIONALISM SUSTAINS IMPORTANT RELATIONS TO CHRISTIAN UNION.—It does so historically, showing that, on its free system of democratic government the primitive Churches, though including wide diversities of opinion, were able to maintain a true unity, not of consolidation but of fellowship. Divisions have since arisen from the exercise of ecclesiastical power by majorities over minorities in a centralized system. The free polity of Congregationalism gives room for free thought, and offers no instrumentality for ecclesiastical oppression, nor tempting prizes to ecclesiastical ambition, to generate strife and produce schism. It went through the anti-slavery agitation and the theological controversy of Old and New School, without division. The tendency of the system to broad, fraternal action is seen in the fact, that for many years, during the settlement of the Interior States, it forebore to organize Churches there, and allowed its members to go into Presbyterian connections. Since it more wisely concluded to maintain its own Scriptural polity, it has proved in a multitude of cases to be the only plan upon which the few Christians of several different denominations in a new settlement could organize a Church; as it allowed them to draw up their own brief Creed and to be exempt from any foreign control. Its spirit is one of increasing liberality towards all evangelical ministers and Church members, and it promises to be the system under which, without loss of liberty, all true Christians may come into visible fellowship.

## III. NATIONAL COUNCIL AT BOSTON

WHOSE are the fathers.—Rom. ix. 5.

UPON the suggestion of the Triennial Convention of the Chicago Theological Seminary, and by the call of a Conference of Committees of the General Associations of the several States, a National Council of the Congregational Churches — Gov. Wm. A. Buckingham, Moderator — was held in Boston, June 14–23, 1865. There were present five hundred and eighteen delegates, sixteen of whom were from foreign countries. At this Council discussion and action were had upon the following topics: Evangelization in the West and South; Church Building; Education for the Ministry; Parochial Evangelism; Statement of Polity and Classification of Benevolent Organ-

izations. The Council resolved to raise during the ensuing year, the sum of $750,000 for the three objects, Home Missions, Church Building, and Work among the Freedmen.

On the next to the last day of its session, the Council met on Burial Hill, Plymouth, on the spot where the first Meeting House of the Pilgrims stood, and there adopted the following

## DECLARATION OF FAITH.

Standing by the Rock where the Pilgrims set foot upon these shores, upon the spot where they worshiped God, and among the graves of the early generations, we, Elders and Messengers of the Congregational Churches of the United States in National Council assembled — like them acknowledging no rule of faith but the Word of God — do now declare our adherence to the faith and order of the Apostolic and Primitive Churches, held by our fathers, and substantially embodied in the confessions and platforms which our Synods of 1648 and 1680 set forth or re-affirmed. We declare that the experience of the nearly two and a half centuries which have elapsed since the memorable day when our sires founded here a Christian commonwealth, with all the development of new forms of error since their times, has only deepened our confidence in the faith and polity of those fathers. We bless God for the inheritance of those doctrines. We invoke the help of the Divine Redeemer, that, through the presence of the promised Comforter, he will enable us to transmit them in purity to our children.

In the times that are before us as a nation, times at once of duty and of danger, we rest all our hope in the Gospel of the Son of God. It was the grand peculiarity of our Puritan fathers, that they held this Gospel, not merely as the ground of their personal salvation, but as declaring the worth of man by the incarnation and sacrifice of the Son of God; and, therefore, applied its principles to elevate society, to regulate education, to civilize humanity, to purify law, to reform the Church and the State, to assert and defend liberty; in short, to mold and redeem by its all-transforming energy, every thing that belongs to man in his individual and social relations.

It was the faith of our fathers that gave us this free land in which we dwell. It is by this faith only that we can transmit to our children a free and happy, because a Christian commonwealth.

We hold it to be a distinctive excellence of our Congregational

system, that it exalts that which is more, above that which is less important, and by the simplicity of its organization facilitates, in communities where the population is limited, the union of all true believers in one Christian Church; and that the division of such communities into several weak and jealous societies, holding the same common faith, is a sin against the unity of the body of Christ, and at once the shame and scandal of Christendom.

We rejoice that, through the influence of our free sysem of Apostolic order, we can hold fellowship with all who acknowledge Christ, and act efficiently in the work of restoring unity to the divided Church, and of bringing back harmony and peace among all "who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

Thus recognizing the unity of the Church of Christ in all the world, and knowing that we are but one branch of Christ's people, while adhering to our peculiar faith and order, we extend to all believers the hand of Christian fellowship upon the basis of those great fundamental truths in which all Christians should agree. With them we confess our faith in God; in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, who is exalted to be our Redeemer and King; and in the Holy Comforter, who is present in the Church to regenerate and sanctify the soul.

With the whole Church we confess the common sinfulness and ruin of our race, and acknowledge that it is only through the work accomplished by the life and expiatory death of Christ, that believers in him are justified before God, receive the remission of sins, and through the presence and grace of the Holy Comforter are delivered from the power of sin and perfected in holiness.

We believe also in an organized and visible Church, in the ministry of the Word, in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, in the resurrection of the body, and in the final judgment, the issues of which are eternal life and everlasting punishment.

We receive these truths on the testimony of God, given through Prophets and Apostles, and in the life, the miracles, the death, the resurrection, of his Son, our Divine Redeemer, — a testimony preserved for the Church in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which were composed by holy men as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Affirming now our belief that those who thus hold "One Faith, one Lord, one Baptism," together constitute the one Catholic Church, the several households of which, though called by different names, are the

one body of Christ; and that these members of his body are sacredly bound to keep "The unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," we declare that we will co-operate with all who hold these truths. With these we will carry the Gospel into every part of the land, and with them we will go into all the world, and "Preach the Gospel to every creature." May He to whom "All power is given in heaven and earth" fulfil the promise which is all our hope: "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." To Him be praise in the Church forever. Amen.

## IV. THE GENIUS OF CONGREGATIONALISM.*

The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.—Rom. viii. 2.

The genius of Congregationalism is to base all ecclesiastical power on spiritual life in the individual soul. The work of God in regeneration and sanctification is his most glorious work. The tie of Sonship to Him, and brotherhood to each other thence resulting, is the most sacred and inviolable. The sacredness of this Divine relationship, Congregationalism, with peculiar jealousy, vindicates as the sole basis of Church organization.

A true local Church is a result and an embodiment of the Gospel, and its peculiarity is, not that it is without any law, but that it is under the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. And all ecclesiastical power is confined to the local Church. So it is essentially evangelical and spiritual, as opposed to legal. Hence it is the genius and the glory of Congregationalism to rely, like the Gospel, of which it is an outgrowth, more on the healing power of Divine light and love in holy men, than upon precedents and technicalities.

The Gospel works through the Divine sacrifice of Christ, and the infinite patience, long-suffering, forgiveness, and love of God in Christ. It is the avowed purpose of the Gospel to bring the Church into the same state of mind, so that she may be in full sympathy with God, and exert a loving, patient, forgiving, healing power like that of God.

The system demands of those who administer it, that they be in this state of mind at all times, but especially when they administer

* Dr. Edward Beecher.

it. An opposite spirit is hostile to moral life. It is infectious. It is pestilential. No assumed or pretended orthodoxy can make good the loss of this healing power, or avert the infection of diseased passions and emotions.

According to the New Testament, this healing power can be and ought to be carried to a high pitch. Against all the infection and provocation of moral evil, the Christian can be, and ought to be, "strengthened with might according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." He can avail himself of all His vital power, who has said, "Ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me and I in you;" and again, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

The effect of this healing power, as used by the Church, is like its effect when used by God. It softens, it subdues, it averts the need of resorting to law and penalty, and courts and trials.

A Council is designed to increase the healing power of one Church by adding that of others. Other Churches are brought in to concentrate new vital power in a focus. Hence every Council should tend to produce a revival of religion, for a revival is nothing but an unusual development of Divine healing power. And as Ministers and Church members would prepare themselves to go into a revival, so they should prepare themselves to go into a Council. And the more difficult the case, the more grace should be in exercise, and the highest demands of the Bible as to holy fellowship with God be met.

In thus making Councils a revival or healing agency, and the Bible their all-pervading law, or constitution, more than in anything else Congregationalism is peculiar. The Bible is peculiar, unlike any other code of laws, in that it is alive with God. "The Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joints and marrow;" and just in proportion as the Bible is the only law, the system is peculiar.

A Council is not a body of lawyers, to conduct trials, but a body of consulting spiritual physicians, whose great medical text-book is the Bible. There are their *materia medica;* there are their rules as to symptoms, and as to discovering the state of the patient; there are their prescriptions. To disregard these, and to introduce nostrums of their own, is mal-practice, and may be soul-murder.

When Ministers and Churches are invited to aid in a revival, they feel their special need of the presence of God, and of self-examination,

confession of sin, humiliation, and earnest, constant prayer. Can any one say why this is not equally necessary in a Council called to meet peculiar developments of the powers of evil, and to resist and overcome them? When, if not then, do they eminently need to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might?

## V. HOW TO FORM A CHURCH.

LET all things be done decently and in order.—1 Cor. xiv. 40.

1. Consider the question, "Is it expedient to form a Church in this place"?—is it needed; is there a suitable number of persons to go into it; is there a reasonable prospect of permanence and self-support for the enterprise?

2. If this question is, with prayer, affirmatively settled, get letters of dismission for all who propose to unite with the Church. From these appoint a committee to examine those who propose to join upon profession of faith, and to prepare a Constitution, Confession of Faith and Covenant to be the basis of union. Adopt a Constitution, Confession and Covenant, and upon that basis elect the officers of the Church, provisionally. Appoint another committee to call an Ecclesiastical Council to give advice, and, if the way is clear, to give assistance in completing the organization by the recognition of public services. Perhaps the Council will ordain the Deacons, and administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

If the place is beyond the reach of sister Churches, the Council may be dispensed with, upon the understanding that the Church enter into such fellowship when the occasion occurs. But it is due to the Congregational idea of the communion of the Churches, that the propriety and orderliness of the proposed organization be submitted to the advice and co-operation of neighboring Churches.

The Council assembles, organizes, inquires into the expediency of the movement, examines the letters, the basis of organization, and,—the way appearing clear,—proceeds in a public way to recognize the Church. The usual parts are (1) Sermon; (2) Propounding Confession and Covenant; (3) Prayer of Recognition and Consecration; (4) Right Hand of Fellowship to the new Church; (5) Address to the Church.

## VI. CONSTITUTION.

THAT thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God.—1 Tim. iii. 15.

### ARTICLE I.—NAME.

THE churches of Christ salute you.—Rom. xvi. 16.

The name of this Church shall be the Congregational Church of Christ in ———

### ARTICLE II.—GOVERNMENT.

ONE is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.—Matt. xxiii. 8.

SECTION 1. The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it, whose majority vote is final. It is amenable to no other ecclesiastical body. It acknowledges the Lord Jesus Christ as its only Head, and receives the Scriptures as its only infallible guide in matters of Faith, Order, and Discipline.

SEC. 2. This Church, while it will control its own affairs, according to its understanding of God's Word, will yet recognize the obligation and the privilege of the communion of Churches by seeking and extending that fellowship, sympathy, advice and co-operation, which the law of Christ demands.

### ARTICLE III.—MEMBERSHIP.

YE are the body of Christ, and members in particular.—1 Cor. xii. 27.

SECTION 1. All persons may become members of this Church who give credible evidence of piety, and who assent to its Confession of Faith and Covenant.

SEC. 2. Persons desirous of becoming members of this Church upon profession of their faith, shall be examined in the presence of the Church, at any regularly called meeting, as to their religious history and their present Christian experience. If approved by the vote of the Church, they shall be received into fellowship on the Communion Sabbath by publicly assenting to the Confession of Faith, and entering into Covenant. In special cases the Church may, however, by vote, instruct the Pastor and Deacons to examine candidates in private, and report the substance of the examination to the Church for action.

SEC. 3. Members of other Evangelical Churches applying for admis-

sion by letter, may be received by vote of the Church, and by publicly assenting to the Confession of Faith and Covenant. It is the right and the privilege of the Church to seek acquaintance with the Christian life of such applicant members by asking for a narrative of their religious history.

Sec. 4. If any member be convinced that he is not truly regenerate, but that he professed religion under self-deception, and shall request a dissolution of his connection with this Church, if there be no scandal in his life requiring discipline, his request shall be granted, after due labor first used, by a simple vote declarative of the facts, which vote shall be publicly announced at the next Communion season.

Sec. 5. Letters of dismission to Evangelical Churches shall be given by vote of the Church to all members in good and unimpeachable standing, who desire them. Members who remove their residence beyond the reach of this Church, should, if practicable, at once transfer their relation to some other Church. If such do not apply for letters within one year from the time of leaving, satisfactory reasons must be given for the delay of the application before the dismission will be granted.

## Article IV.—Officers.

That ye should be officers in the house of the Lord.—Jer. xxix. 26.

Section 1. The permanent officers of this Church shall be a Pastor, and two or more Deacons. (Provided, however, that the office of Deacon may be made triennial, if the Church so elect.) The other officers shall be a Clerk and a Treasurer, who shall be elected annually, and three Trustees, who shall be chosen so that one shall go out each year.

Sec. 2. All officers shall be elected by ballot; and all, except the Pastor, without public nomination, unless a committee shall be appointed for that purpose. All elections shall be determined by a vote of the majority of the members of the Church present and voting. All officers, except the Pastor, shall serve until their successors are elected. Vacancies may be filled at the option of the Church.

Sec. 3. The Pastor, who, as soon as practicable after his installation, shall become a member of the Church, shall have control of the pulpit, and the exercises of public worship, shall preach the Word, shall ordinarily be the Moderator in the meetings of the Church, shall take the spiritual oversight of the flock, shall administer the Sacraments, and shall execute the discipline ordered by the Church.

In the settlement of a Pastor, the Church shall act by an Ecclesiastical Council, called in the usual manner; and such a Council shall be mutually called by the Pastor and the Church to act upon the question of his dismission, whenever the Pastor shall desire it, or the Church shall so vote in a meeting notified on the preceding Sabbath for that specified purpose.

Sec. 4. The Deacons shall aid the Pastor in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, shall take the charge of the communion service and of providing for the communion table, shall have the oversight of the poor members for visitation and relief, and shall assist the Pastor generally in the spiritual care of the congregation.

Sec. 5. The Clerk shall keep a faithful record of the proceedings of all business meetings of the Church, and shall submit the same for revision and correction at each meeting preparatory to the Communion. He shall keep a register of the Church members, with the date of their reception and of their removal, and a record of all baptisms. He shall issue letters of dismission voted by the Church, keep on file all correspondence, all written official reports, and all other valuable papers of the Church, shall audit the accounts of the Treasurer, and shall make an annual report.

Sec. 6. The Treasurer shall receive the funds of the Church; the charitable contributions he shall dispense under the direction of the Deacons; the benevolent contributions he shall forward to their respective destinations; and the funds for the support of the Church he shall disburse upon the order of the Trustees, and shall make an annual report to the Church.

Sec. 7. The Trustees, a majority of whom must be members of the Church, shall see that they are legally incorporated according to the laws of the State; shall hold the property of the Church, superintend the raising of the minister's salary, provide for the incidental expenses, subject always to a directing vote of the Church, and having no power to buy, sell, mortgage, or transfer property, without a specific vote of authority by the Church, and shall make an annual report of their doings to the Church.

## Article V.— Discipline.

Tell it unto the Church.

Section 1. The rule of discipline shall be the law of Christ recorded in Matt. xviii. 15–17.

SEC. 2. In *private offences* the offended one is, by a fraternal, prayerful conference to seek a spiritual healing, and so to "*gain* the brother." Failing in this, let him "take one or two more," and again strive to exert a loving, patient, healing power, which shall soften and subdue, and avert the necessity of resorting to the law and the penalty of a Church trial.

SEC. 3. In *public offences*, inasmuch as every member suffers in the wrongs done to the Church, every member, cognizant of the same, shall be responsible for laboring, in the spirit of Christ, to bring the offender to repentance, or, in failure of success, for communicating the case to the Church, or to the Pastor, or Deacons.

SEC. 4. In telling the case to the Church, aggrieved persons must present their charges in writing. If the Church vote to entertain the complaint, they will then appoint a time for a hearing of the case, and summon the accused to be present to take his trial, furnishing him with a written copy of the charges, and the names of the witnesses relied on for proof, at least a week before the trial.

SEC. 5. Upon the trial the accused may call to his aid any member of the Church; in case of his non-appearance, a member shall be appointed to defend his case. The confession of the accused, or the testimony of two witnesses, or that which is fairly equivalent, shall be requisite for conviction.

SEC. 6. If the Church shall find the accused guilty, they may, in their wisdom, admonish, suspend or excommunicate him. Any act of extreme censure shall be publicly announced. In cases of difficulty the advice and aid of a Council may be sought.

SEC. 7. An excommunicated person may be restored upon evidence of repentance, confession of sin, and reformation of his conduct.

## ARTICLE VI.—MEETINGS AND CONTRIBUTIONS.

IN the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together.—1 Cor. v. 4.

SECTION 1. The Annual Meeting shall be held on ————, in January, when the annual reports shall be rendered, and the regular elections made.

SEC. 2. Business may be transacted at any regular meeting of the Church, or at a special meeting, called from the pulpit, on the preceding Sabbath, by the officers of the Church, or by the written request of five adult members of the Church.

SEC. 3. A Weekly Prayer Meeting, and a Monthly Concert of

Prayer for the conversion of the world, will be appointed at the discretion of the Church.

SEC. 4. Contributions shall be solicited in the congregation for the leading objects of Christian beneficence, according to a schedule adopted by the Church from time to time. Prominent among these causes shall be Home and Foreign Missions, and Church Building.

### ARTICLE VII.—ORDINANCES.

THE communion of the blood of Christ. The washing of regeneration.

SECTION 1. The Lord's Supper shall ordinarily be celebrated on the first Sabbaths of January, March, May, July, September, and November. It shall be preceded by a preparatory service during the week previous. The invitation to the Lord's Table shall be such as to include all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth, and who have made a public profession of their faith.

SEC. 2. Baptism will be administered in connection with the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

### ARTICLE VIII.—AMENDMENTS AND BY-LAWS.

SECTION 1. This Constitution, the Confession of Faith, and the Covenant, may be altered at a meeting, of which due notice shall be given on the preceding Sabbath, with a statement of the proposed alteration, by a majority of the resident members of the Church, or by two-thirds of those present, provided the change does not infringe upon the organic principles of this Church.

SEC. 2. By-Laws, to carry out the provisions of this Constitution, may be enacted at any business meeting.

---

## VII. CONFESSION OF FAITH.*

STAND fast in the faith.—1 Cor. xvi. 13.

As a Church of Jesus Christ, associated in accordance with the teachings of the New Testament, for the public worship of God, for the observance of Gospel Sacraments and Ordinances, for mutual edification and encouragement in the Christian life, and for the

* From the Manual of Dr. J. P. Thompson's Broadway Tabernacle Church, New York.

advancement of the Redeemer's Kingdom, we declare our union in Faith and Love with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

Receiving the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God and the only infallible rule of religious faith and practice, we confess our faith in the one living and true God, revealed as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; the Creator and Preserver of all things, whose purposes and providence extend to all events, and who exercises a righteous government over all his creatures.

We believe in the universal sinfulness and ruin of our race, since "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, having taken upon Himself our nature, has, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, provided a way of salvation for all mankind; and that through faith in his name, whosoever will, may be saved.

We believe that although salvation is offered freely to all, they only repent and believe in Christ, who, in thus obeying the Gospel, are regenerated by the Holy Spirit; and that all who are thus regenerated are "kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation."

We believe that the Christian Sabbath, the Ministry of the Word, the Visible Church, and the Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are divinely appointed, and are binding on the followers of Christ until his coming.

We believe that there is a Day appointed, in which God will raise the dead, and judge the world; that the wicked shall "go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal."

*Do you thus solemnly profess to believe?*

### BAPTISM.

[*The Pastor will first address those who come by profession, and who have been baptized in infancy, as follows:*]

You, who were dedicated to God in your childhood in the ordinance of Infant Baptism, by your believing parents, do hereby declare your personal acceptance of the same, and your belief that the regeneration hereby signified has been wrought within your soul by the Holy Spirit.

[*Then to the others the Pastor will say:*]

You, who trust that your hearts have been renewed by the Holy

Spirit, but who have never received the outward seal of the covenant, will now upon this profession of your faith, present yourselves for the ordinance of Baptism.

[*When Baptism has been administered, the Pastor will then say:*]

Attend now to the Covenants into which you are to enter with God and this Church.

### COVENANT.

LET us give ourselves unto the Lord in a perpetual covenant, never to be broken.—Jer. l. 5.

Accepting this as the faith of this Church, you who now present yourselves to be received into its fellowship, do by this act avow your personal sense of the love of God in the forgiveness of your sins; and, trusting that He who hears and answers prayer, will uphold and strengthen you, you do give yourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, and *covenant* to be His disciples, receiving Him as your only Priest and Propitiation, your great Teacher, Lawgiver and King; you dedicate yourselves to God as the object of your highest love, and to His service as your highest joy; engaging to walk with us in the due observance of Christian ordinances, and that, by the aid of the Divine Spirit, you will honor your profession by a constant Christian life.

Do you thus covenant with God and with this Church?

[*Here the members of the Church will stand up, and the Pastor will read the following:*]

### RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH.

We then, the members of this Church, in view of these your professions and engagements, do joyfully and affectionately receive you to this Communion, and welcome you to this fellowship with us in the blessings of the Gospel and in the service of our Divine Redeemer. We covenant to love and watch over you, and in Christian fidelity to seek your advancement in the life and likeness of Him whose name we bear. And now, beloved of the Lord, let it be impressed upon your minds that you have entered into solemn engagements, from which you can never escape. Wherever you go, these vows will be upon you. They will follow you to the bar of God, and abide upon you to eternity. May you walk worthy of God, and of your profession! May the Lord guide and preserve you till death; and at last receive you and us to that blessed world, where our love and joy shall be forever perfect! And unto Him who is able

to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.

[*Here the Pastor may give the Right Hand to each person, with such words as he may be pleased to add.*]

### ANOTHER FORM OF CONFESSION AND COVENANT.*

Who witnessed a good confession.—1 Tim. vi. 13.

Dearly Beloved: You are here before God and many witnesses, to confess the Lord Jesus Christ. We trust that you appreciate the solemnity and the blessedness of this confession, and that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

We believe in God the Father Almighty, the Being of absolute perfection, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the universe; Who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for its redemption;

And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was in the beginning with God and was God; who became man and suffered to take away the sin of the world; in whom alone we have redemption, being justified freely, through faith in His blood; who rose from the dead, and ascended on high, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead, punishing the wicked with everlasting destruction from His presence, and receiving His people into His everlasting kingdom;

And in the Holy Ghost, the Comforter; through whom alone we, being by nature children of wrath, are renewed and sanctified; by whose inspiration the Scriptures are given; who with the Father and the Son, together one God, is supremely to be loved and served, and alone to be adored;

And in one Church on earth and in Heaven; and in one Baptism for the remission of sins; and in one Communion of the body and blood of Christ; and we look for the Resurrection of the dead, and the Life immortal. Amen.

This you truly confess and heartily believe?

[*The candidates shall assent by bowing.*]

* Introduced by Rev. John E. Todd's Central Congregational Church, Boston, and adopted by other Churches.

In the presence of God and this assembly, you do now freely and cordially enter into the everlasting covenant of grace.

You do confess the Father Almighty, your Maker and Preserver, the Lord Jesus Christ, your Saviour and Master, and the Holy Spirit, Sanctifier and Guide, to be your God.

You do trust only in His sovereign grace and almighty power.

And you do promise that you will henceforth faithfully endeavor to keep his commandments, and follow Him in all things; to walk with His disciples in love; and, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

This you truly confess, and heartily engage?

[*The candidates shall assent as before.*]

[BAPTISM

*shall here be administered to those of the candidates who have never been Baptized. Then the Minister shall continue as follows:*]

We then as members of this Church,

[*Here the members of the Church shall rise.*]

in the name of Christ, affectionately welcome you to His discipleship; to a share in the blessings and promises of His covenant; to a participation in the duties, privileges, and glories of His Church; and to the fellowship of that great multitude which no man can number, who have confessed Him on earth, and who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

In token of our confidence and sympathy, and as a pledge of our brotherly kindness and love, take the hand of welcome, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said:

[*Here the Minister shall take each new member by the hand in turn, repeating to each some appropriate saying of Jesus.*

*Then, the Church still standing, the Minister shall say:*]

And now, beloved in the Lord, whereas in former time ye [you] were without Christ, being aliens [an alien] from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers [a stranger] from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world, now, therefore, ye [you] are no more strangers [a stranger] and foreigners [foreigner] but fellow-citizens [a fellow-citizen] with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles

and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner stone. For this cause, we bow our knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts [heart] by faith; that ye [you] being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye [you] might be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

The peace of God which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you, and remain with you always. Amen.

---

The following is the form of the covenant with the *Church*, to be subscribed by every candidate *before* making the public confession of Christ:

### COVENANT OF ——— CHURCH.

We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, do hereby solemnly promise, that, as members of this Church of Christ, we will faithfully endeavor to honor it in our conduct and life; to give diligent attendance upon its services and ordinances; to refrain from opposing its faith; to submit to its rules and discipline; to labor and pray for its increase, purity, and peace; and to walk with its disciples in love, seeking and improving opportunities to minister to them.

---

### APOSTLES' CREED.

We believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary; suffered death under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended

into the grave; the third day He arose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the communion of Saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.

---

## VIII. MANUAL FOR BUSINESS MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH.*

I KNOW thee to be expert in all customs and questions.—Acts xxvi. 3.

WHEN the appointed time for the meeting arrives, the Pastor, as Moderator, shall call the Church to order. If there is no Pastor, or if he be absent, then the senior Deacon, or some older member will call to order, and call for the choice of a Moderator. On taking the chair, and opening the meeting with prayer, the Moderator, if the Clerk of the Church is not present, will call for the appointment of a Clerk *pro tem.*

If the meeting be adjourned to another day, the same officers preside again, for an adjournment is but a continuance of the *same meeting.*

All the decisions of the presiding officers are subject to revision by the Church.

Every motion must be made in writing, *if required* by any member; and, when seconded, must be read by the Moderator, and submitted to the consideration of the Church. Until this motion is disposed of, all subsequent propositions must be made by way of amendment to it. An amendment may go to the exclusion, addition, or substitution of words or sentences; indeed, a motion to amend by striking out all the words after the word *resolved*, and substituting an entirely new proposition upon the same subject, is in order. Until some vote has been taken on a resolution or an amendment to it, it may be withdrawn by the mover.

There are certain motions which are termed "*privileged*," which may be made at *any time:* such are the motions to postpone indefinitely, to refer to a committee, to lay on the table (which means to

* From Henry Ward Beecher's Plymouth Church Manual, orginally furnished for Punchard's work, by David Hale, Esq., of New York, an expert Parliamentarian, and a hearty Conregationalist.

lay aside for the present), to postpone to a future time fixed, and to adjourn. All these motions may be debated except the last. When a member is speaking, no motion can be made but with his consent.

When any motion is before the Church, every member has a right to express his views concerning it; and while doing so, the Moderator is bound to confine him in his remarks to the point under consideration, and also to protect him against all interruption, except to call him to order if he violate the rules of courtesy or of debate; but after the matter of order is adjusted, he has a right to go on to the end of his remarks.

The proposition *last made* is always the proposition under consideration, and the first to be voted on; so that when several amendments or propositions are before the meeting, the order in which they are to be voted upon is usually the *reverse* of the order in which they were made. If several *sums* are proposed, the *largest* is the first put to vote; if several *times*, the *longest;* and as to the numbers generally, the *largest*.

When a motion is put to vote, it should be first clearly stated from the Chair, so that there may be no possible misunderstanding about it. Then the Moderator says: "As many as are in favor of this resolution, will please to say Aye," *or* "lift up their hands," *or* "rise," as the custom of the Church may be; then, "As many as are against this resolution," *or* "as are of a different opinion, will please to say No," *or* "lift up their hands," *or* "rise." Then the Moderator declares the result by saying, "It is a vote," *or* "it is *not* a vote." If any member thinks the Moderator in error, or that an accurate count would change the result, he has a right to demand it immediately; in which case the question must be put again, and the vote carefully counted. After the question is put to vote there can be no debate, and no new proposition made until the vote is finished. After the vote is taken, any member who voted in the *majority*, may, during the *same* meeting move a reconsideration; which motion opens the subject again for debate; and if the vote to reconsider is adopted, the whole matter stands just as it did before the reconsidered vote was taken.

Questions of *order* are to be decided by the Moderator; but if any member thinks the decision incorrect, he can appeal to the meeting; and the decision on that appeal will be final.

When the report of a committee is presented, it will of course be

put on file. A vote to accept and adopt, is an expression of concurrence with the views of the committee.

When a member has a motion to make, or wishes to speak on a pending motion, he must rise and address himself respectfully to the Moderator.

A member who has a motion to make, may preface it with such remarks as explain his design; but, with this exception, speaking is out of order, unless some definite proposition has been submitted and is under consideration.

## IX. LETTERS MISSIVE, AND OTHER FORMS.*

AND they wrote letters by them after this manner.—Acts xv. 23.

### 1.—TO ORGANIZE A CHURCH.

To the Congregational Church of Christ in ———.

*Dear Brethren :*— The Great Head of the Church having inclined a number of believers here to think that it is our duty to become associated as a Congregational Church, we respectfully request you, by your Pastor, and a delegate, to meet in Council at ———, in this place, on the ——— of ———, at ——— o'clock, in the ———, to consider the expediency of the course proposed by us, and advise us in reference thereto; and should the formation of such a Church be deemed expedient, to assist in the public service appropriate to its formation and recognition.

Wishing you grace, mercy and peace,

We subscribe ourselves,

Your brethren in Christ,

——— ———
——— ——— } *Com. of those proposing to unite.*
——— ———

[Date, and place of date].

N. B.—The other Churches invited to sit in this Council are the llowing:

Congregational Church in ———, Rev. Mr. B., Pastor.
" " in ———, " " " " "

* Dexter's "Congregationalism."

### 2.—TO INSTALL OR ORDAIN A MINISTER.

The Congregational Church in A———, to the Congregational Church in B———, sendeth greeting:

*Dear Brethren:*—The Great Head of the Church has kindly united us, and the Congregation statedly worshiping with us, in the choice of Mr. (Rev.) A——— B——— as our Pastor, and he has accepted our invitation to that office. We, therefore, affectionately request your attendance, by your Pastor and a delegate, at ———, on the ——— day of ———, at ——— o'clock in the ———, to examine the candidate, review our proceedings, and advise us in reference to the same; and, if judged expedient, to assist in the Ordination (Installation) service.

Wishing you grace, mercy and peace,

We are fraternally yours,

——— ———
——— ——— } *Committee of the Church.*
——— ———

[Date and place of date].

N. B.—The other Churches invited are as follows:

[Name them all].

It is also proper to append to those letters sent to Churches, whose Pastors are desired to take part in the public service, a postscript, notifying them of the parts assigned, that such Pastors may have suitable time for preparation.

### 3.—A LETTER OF DISMISSION.

The Congregational Church in ———, to the Congregational Church in ———, sendeth greeting:

*Dear Brethren:*—The bearer, Bro. A. B., is a member with us in good and regular standing. He has desired a letter of dismission from us, and of recommendation to your Christian fellowship, and we have granted his request; so that when received by you his membership with us will cease.

Wishing you grace, mercy and peace,

We are, yours in the Lord,

C. D., Church Clerk.

N. B.—Please inform us, by a return of the accompanying certificate, of our brother's reception by you:

This is to certify that A. B. was received a member of the Congregational Church in ———, on the ——— day of ———, by letter from the Congregational Church in ———.

Attest: E. F., Church Clerk.

[Date and place].

## X. HOW TO INCORPORATE A CHURCH.

Each State has its peculiar statute for this purpose. To this law, carefully examined, the proceeding must conform, in order to secure for the Church a legal corporation, by which it can hold property and protect its civil rights. Many Churches neglect this process, or attend to it in an irregular way, and thus, sooner or later, bring themselves into trouble.

The Church itself, with an adopted Constitution and Trustees, elected according to its provisions, may be the Corporation. Its members are the legal corporators. "This," says Dexter, "is the New Testament plan; so far as it hints any plan at all. And there is no legal hindrance of which we are aware, in any State, which would necessarily forbid any Church that pleases to do so, from assuming the entire charge of its temporalities, building and owning its own house of worship, pledging and raising all moneys needed for the support of public worship, and doing all, that, in any case, is done by both Church and Society. In the West, particularly, it is believed that this plan has been extensively tried, and is held to be safe, expedient and successful." Upham, in his "Ratio Disciplinæ," says: "Churches *are corporate bodies;*" "Congregationalists assert that Churches may exist alone, and without parishes." Dr. Pond, in his "Rights of Congregational Churches," says: "There are, at this moment, hundreds of Congregational Churches in different parts of our land, which have no connection with incorporate parishes, or religious societies, and never had any. Some of these Churches are in the cities and in the older States; others are in the newly settled parts of our country. They own their Meeting Houses; they settle and support their Ministers; they exist and they flourish without the help or the hindrance of connected parishes." Dr. H. M. Storrs, in the *Congregational Quarterly*, for 1860, says: "This mixed Society is (1) a needlessly cumbrous appendage;" (2) "involves an inconsistency;" (3) "is fruitful of difficulties." "Such a Society,—as something separate and distinct from the Church, is not needed, and

therefore is an evil; we want the utmost simplicity. No merchant would keep two sets of books when one would do."

Dr. Dexter shows that the Society system grew out of the peculiar history of religious affairs in New England, it being the result of severing the connection between Church and State. The mixed Society, having thus a basis in the history and existing laws of New England, still remains the usual method there. But this occasion does not exist in the other States.

It is, however, a custom with Churches, that dispense with the Society, to allow a minority of the Trustees to be chosen from the non-communicant members of the congregation, who are thus practically represented, and whose interest and service are thereby secured. This is the only way in which persons, who are not members but supporters, are represented in the Methodist and the Episcopal Churches. The custom in this matter among the Presbyterians and the Baptists is mixed, very much as among our Churches.

Yet some Churches will prefer to have a separate Society. In some circumstances it seems desirable; and, when properly guarded by a Constitution and by a Compact, mutually adopted by the Church and Society, it will avoid difficulties which would otherwise ensue. For the benefit of such Churches, something like the following organic law and compact are suggested:

## CONSTITUTION OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL SOCIETY.

### Article I. — Name and Object.

Section 1. The name of this Society shall be the Congregational Society of ———.

Sec. 2. Its object shall be to co-operate with the Congregational Church of ———, in providing for and maintaining the public worship of Almighty God, in accordance with the faith and order thereof.

### Article II. — Membership.

All members of the Church, and all persons who are stated attendants on public worship with this Church and Society, and who contribute regularly to its support, according to its methods,

and who subscribe their names to this Constitution, shall be members of this Society and entitled to vote at its meetings.

### Article III. — Officers.

Section 1. The officers of this Society shall be a Chairman, who shall be chosen at each meeting; a Clerk and a Treasurer, who shall be chosen annually; and three Trustees, who shall be elected so that one shall go out each year; a majority of whom shall be members of the Church.

Sec. 2. All elections, except that of Chairman, shall be by ballot, by a majority vote, and without public nomination, unless a committee shall have been appointed for that purpose, and all officers shall hold over until their successors are elected.

Sec. 3. It shall be the duty of the Trustees to secure their legal incorporation; to hold the property of the Society; to superintend the raising of the Minister's salary; to provide for the incidental expenses; to manage other pecuniary affairs of the Society, and make to it an annual report of their doings. The Trustees shall be subject always to a directing vote of the Society, and shall have no power to sell, mortgage or transfer property without a specific vote of the Society.

Sec. 4. The Clerk shall keep a record of the proceedings of the Society; shall at each meeting read the record of the preceding, and shall audit the accounts of the Treasurer.

Sec. 5. The Treasurer shall receive all moneys belonging to the Society, and pay out the same upon the order of the Trustees, and shall make an annual report to the Society of his receipts and disbursements, duly audited by the Clerk.

### Article IV. — Meetings.

Section 1. The Annual Meeting for the election of officers, the hearing of reports, and the transaction of other appropriate business, shall be held on the ——— of January.

Sec. 2. Special Meetings may be convened at any time by the Trustees, by the Pastor, or by the written request of any five members, — notice of the same having been given from the pulpit on the Sabbath previous.

Sec. 3. Seven members of the Society shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Sec. 4. The Order of Business at the meetings of the Society, shall be as follows:

(1) Reading of the call.
(2) Choice of a Chairman.
(3) Prayer.
(4) Reading Minutes of previous meeting.
(5) Reports.
(6) Election of officers.
(7) Miscellaneous business.
(8) Prayer.
(9) Adjournment.

### Article V.—Amendments.

This Constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present, and voting at any meeting called according to the provisions of Art. IV.,— the proposed alteration having been stated in the public notice of the meeting.

## COMPACT BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY.

### Article I.—Principle of Agreement.

All the spiritual interests and arrangements connected with public worship, shall be under the exclusive control of the Church; and all the financial and other secular interests and arrangements of the Congregation, shall be under the exclusive control of the Society. This shall be the principle, the rule, to determine all doubtful cases, and in accordance with which the succeeding articles are adopted.

### Article II.—Hold the Property.

The Society, through its trustees, will hold the property, receive the income, disburse the same, appoint the sexton, and fix his salary.

### Article III.—Calling a Pastor.

In the settlement of a Pastor, the Church shall always act first in making the call; after which the Society shall vote to concur or not to concur, and shall have the exclusive right to fix the salary; but in every vote of the Society, touching the call or dismission of a Pastor, a majority of the Church members present, as voters, must be in the vote to make it valid.

### Article IV.—Pulpit Supply.

Whenever the pulpit is vacant by the absence or dismission of the Pastor, the Church, by its Deacons, will provide a temporary supply; and the Trustees of the Society, in consultation with the Deacons, will determine the compensation. But no person shall continue as a supply longer than three months, without a concurrent vote of the Church and Society.

### Article V.—Sacred Music.

The selection of Chorister and Organist, and the control of sacred music, as a part of worship, shall be vested in the Church; but the control of the necessary expenses connected with the music, shall be with the Society through its Trustees.

### Article VI.—Control of the House.

The Pastor shall have liberty to use the Church edifice at his discretion, to promote the spiritual interests of the Church and Congregation, and the Church may also use the same for any meetings of a spiritual nature; but for all other purposes the control of the building shall be with the Society, or its Trustees, who shall not, however, allow it to be used for unworthy and worldly purposes, nor put it to any use which shall interfere with the arrangements of the Church and of the Pastor.

### Article VII.—Alter Compact.

The foregoing Articles of Agreement, for the proper adjustment of the spiritual and secular relations of the Church and Society, having been mutually adopted by a separate vote of each, and placed by each in its book of records, can be altered, in whole or in part, only in the same way.

## LEGAL STEPS FOR INCORPORATION.

In Illinois.—At the organization: (1) Adopt a Constitution; assume a corporate name; (2) elect Trustees (not more than ten) according to its provisions; (3) let them make out a certificate, signed by all of them, that they were elected for the specified time, and giving the name; (4) let one of them go before an officer, duly qualified to administer oaths, and make affidavit to the assertions of the certificate; (5) let the officer attach his certificate and seal; (6)

then let the whole document be recorded in the office of the County Recorder. At subsequent elections, let (7) one of the old Trustees in the same way certify the election of the new ones; and (8) let this be recorded as before. The process will be the same, whether the Trustees were elected by a Church or by a Society. The following, drawn up by the Hon. S. B. Gookins, of Chicago, is the appropriate certificate:

We, A. B., etc., do hereby certify that at a meeting of [*name of Church, or Society*], a [*Church, or Society*], formed for the purpose of religious worship, and located at ———, in the County of ———, and State of Illinois, of which meeting due notice was given, we were elected Trustees of said [*Church, or Society*], for ——— year— [*if, as is sometimes done, the Trustees are classified, some for one and some for two or three years, the certificate should conform to the fact, designating those elected for the different periods*], by means whereof, and of the recording of this certificate, said [*Church, or Society*], is constituted a body corporate, by the name of "The Trustees of [*name*]."

In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and seals this ——— day of ——— 18—.

——— ——— [SEAL].
——— ——— [SEAL].
——— ——— [SEAL].
——— ——— [SEAL].
——— ——— [SEAL].

STATE OF ILLINOIS, } ss.
——— County. }

A. B., one of the persons named in, and who has signed the foregoing certificate, being duly sworn, says the matters and things stated in the said certificate are true. [*Sign*].

Subscribed and sworn to before me this ——— day of ———, 18—. Witness my hand and official seal the day and year aforesaid.

Upon the recording of this certificate in the Recorder's Office of the County, and not before, the Church or Society becomes a body corporate, and may take hold, and convey property.

The following form may be used by the old Trustees in certifying to the election of their successors, as required by the statutes of this State:

This is to certify, that at a regular annual meeting of the ———, held on the ——— day of ———, A.D. 18—, the following persons

were elected Trustees of said Society, to hold office during the ensuing year 18—, or until the next election, to-wit:

(Signed). ——— ——— } *Former Trustees.*
——— ———

STATE OF ILLINOIS. } ss.
——— County. }

——— ——— of said County, being duly sworn, says that the allegations contained in the above certificate, by him signed, are true.

Subscribed and sworn to this ——— day of ———, A.D. 18—.

IN NEW YORK.—(1). At place of public worship give notice fifteen days before the organization, and on two successive Sabbaths. (2). Let the meeting appoint two members of the congregation who shall preside at the election, receive the ballots, judge of the qualification of voters; and, after the election, certify, under their hands and seals, the names of persons elected as Trustees, the corporate name adopted, and have the same acknowledged and recorded in the County Clerk's Office. To elect new Trustees, one month before the expiration of any term of office, let the same notice be given as at first, specifying the names of those whose terms will expire, the new election being held at least six days before such vacancies occur. Then at the election proceed as in the first case. Only male persons of lawful age, who have statedly worshiped with the congregation, or have been considered members, can vote at the first election; after that such electors must have been stated worshipers there at least *one year* previous to the election, and must have contributed to the support of the Society according to the usages and customs thereof. The number of Trustees shall be not less than three nor more than nine. They are to be elected for three years, and so that one-third go out each year. A plurality of votes decides the election of Trustees.

CERTIFICATE.

STATE OF NEW YORK, } ss.
County of ———. }

We, the undersigned, two of the members of the Church (or Society) hereinafter mentioned, do certify that on the ——— day of ———, 18—, the male persons of full age, belonging to a Church (or Society), in which divine worship is celebrated according to the rites of Congregational Churches, and not already incorporated, met at the place of worship heretofore occupied by the said Church, in the town of ———, in said county, for the purpose of incorporating themselves;

and did then and there elect, by plurality of voices, A. B., C. D., etc., as Trustees for said Church; and the said persons did then and there determine, by the like plurality of voices, that the said Trustees, and their successors, should forever hereafter be called and known by the name and title of the "Congregational Church of ———."

Witness our hands and seals this ——— day of ———, 18—.

In presence of E. F.

A. B., [SEAL].
C. D., [SEAL].

In Wisconsin.—Use the same method, as the law is the same, except that only six months, instead of a year, of attendance is required of an elector, and that the certificate, acknowledged, is to be recorded by the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, and not by the Clerk of the County Court.

In Minnesota.—The same again as in New York, except that only six months' attendance is required, and the certificate is to be recorded by the Register of Deeds for the County.

In Michigan.—The same as in New York, except that the elector, of lawful age, must have been an attendant six months previous, and a supporter one year, in order to vote at elections subsequent to the first, and that the certificate is to be recorded by the Clerk of the County.

In Ohio.—A majority vote in any duly notified meeting of an organized Church or Society, elects not less than three Trustees and a Clerk. The Clerk must make a true record of the proceedings of the meeting, and certify and deliver the same to the County Recorder to be recorded, together with the name by which such Church or Society is to be known.

In Indiana.—Notice of the election of Trustees must be given ten days previous by publication in a newspaper of the County, if any; otherwise by posting such notice in three public places in the Township, one of which must be at the place of the proposed election. Trustees not less than three nor more than five. The Clerk of the Church or Society, within ten days after the election, must deposit with the County Recorder a certificate, setting forth the notice of

such election, time and place where it was held, the name of the Church or Society, and of persons elected as Trustees.

In Iowa.—This certificate points out the way:

State of Iowa, } ss.
County of Dubuque. }

We, the undersigned, citizens of the United States, and a majority citizens of the State of Iowa, do hereby certify that we have associated ourselves together for religious purposes as a religious Society. That the name or title by which such Society shall be known in law is "The First Congregational Church of Dubuque." That the object of the Society is to maintain divine worship and the gospel ministry according to the rites of Congregational Churches in the United States. That the number of Trustees, to manage the temporal affairs of the Society, is fixed at (five). And that the following are the names of the Trustees of such Society for the first year of its existence, viz., A. B., C. D., etc.

Witness our hands at Dubuque, this ——— day of ———, 18—.

[Signatures].

This certificate must be made in duplicate, acknowledged as a deed of real estate, one copy to be deposited with Secretary of State, and one with the County Recorder.

In Kansas.—The process is the same as in Indiana, except the ten days' notice is not prescribed. One of the Trustees must act as Clerk of the Board, and must file within one month after each election, at the office of the Recorder of Deeds of the County, an affidavit setting forth the notice of the election, the election, and the names of the Trustees, and the name of the Church or Society.

In California.—The Church or Society elects its Trustees according to its rules, not less than three nor more than fifteen. The judges holding the election will deposit with the Clerk of the County a certificate, duly acknowledged, stating the names of the Trustees and the name of the corporate body.

## ADVANTAGES OF CONGREGATIONALISM.*

1. The first and chief advantage of Congregationalism is that it is *scriptural*. It is substantially in accordance with the organizations of the Apostles.

2. A second advantage is: It is the logical *outgrowth* of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. It is the application of the doctrine of human rights to church order and government. But human rights are founded in God's rights over the individual; and he must therefore be left free to the unrestrained exercise of them, in glorifying his Creator. No man or angel, pope or bishop, has a right to step in and prevent the free exercise of his powers in the direction required of him. In this view, Congregationalism is the logical result of God's rightful sovereignty over man.

The Gospel further teaches that men are naturally dead in trespasses and sins, and all alike under condemnation. If brought into the kingdom of Christ, they are introduced into it by free, sovereign grace. "It is the gift of God." Here all renewed men stand on a level. As they are all brethren in Christ, who is their elder Brother, there is a perfect equality between them. No one can rightfully usurp authority over the others. And herein is the essence of a Congregational Church. No functionary in it has any dominion over it. The pastor is but its president and teacher, holding forth the eternal verities,— the reproofs and consolations of the Gospel. Hence, Congregationalism, as a form of church polity, is the exponent and embodiment of the fundamental truths of the Gospel, in a permanent, public institution. Thus held, it becomes itself a vital, spiritual power in the Church, like the truths out of which it grows. Congregationalism, and "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus," have the same significance. "There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all,"— such is the handwriting, as it were, on the forefront of every Congregational Church.

3. Another advantage of Congregationalism is its *free, republican* character. It is adapted to a free people. Its influence is to make and keep them free. A Congregational Church is a society of spiritual freemen. It acknowledges no head, no lawgiver, but Christ, and

* From Dr. Enoch Pond's Premium Tract.

no appropriate means of influence, but those of truth, wisdom, and love. All important matters are transacted openly, in church meeting, where every brother has an equal right to express his opinion, and to give his vote.

It is to these free principles of *church* government, which our fathers professed to draw from the Bible, that we are indebted for our civil freedom. With the first settlers of New England the Church was the primary institution, to which the State was secondary and subsidiary. They first formed their system of church government, and then adapted their civil government to it. And what form of civil government would they be likely to select in order to carry out their plan? Obviously, none but a free republic. No other would have answered their purpose at all. To have established a monarchy, or an aristocracy, in connection with their Congregationalism, would have been incongruous and monstrous.

4. Among the advantages of Congregationalism should be reckoned its salutary *personal* influence on those who embrace it. Every member of a Congregational Church feels that he has a deep interest, and an individual responsibility, in regard to its concerns. He is not a mere appendage to it, to be cared for, looked after, and ruled over by "tutors and governors," but is himself an integral part of the body, and of the government, having it in charge, with others, to maintain its worship, its order, its discipline, and to promote its purity, enlargement, and peace. He feels, in short, that he is a *man*,— *a free Christian man*, intrusted with high and important interests, and that he must acquit himself accordingly. He must inform himself as to the truths and duties of religion; he must grow in knowledge and in grace; he must be watchful and prayerful, diligent in duty and circumspect in deportment, that he may honor the profession which he has made, and be an ornament to the Church of which he is a member. As much as a republican form of civil government demands intelligence, and tends to promote it among citizens, so does a republican form of church government tend to the personal advancement — the knowledge, virtue, and holiness — of those who live under it. It throws upon them individually high responsibilities, and awakens their energies and stirs their zeal to meet these responsibilities in a worthy and becoming manner.

And in elevating the individual members of a Church, Congregationalism tends, of course, to promote the purity and elevation of the Church itself. This is too obvious to require argument. For of

what does a Church consist but of its individual members? And whatever has a tendency to elevate the members must tend equally to the benefit of the body itself.

5. Another advantage of Congregationalism is *its good influence upon ministers.* Congregational ministers are taken from the people, and are elected to the stations they occupy by the free suffrages of their brethren. And when in office, they are not lords over God's heritage, but its servants. They have not dominion over the faith of those around them, but are helpers of their joy. They have not those temptations to ambition and pride which are furnished by some other forms of ecclesiastical organization, but have every inducement to be diligent and faithful, that they may be accepted of God and approved of men.

These happy tendencies of Congregationalism upon its ministers are all illustrated in the early history of the Church. During the first century after Christ, and the greater part of the second century, the Churches were all of them Congregational; and their ministers were an honor to the system. They were such as the system was adapted to produce. A more humble, patient, laborious, self-sacrificing class of men the world never saw. But when the government of the Church was gradually changed, and the humble pastors of the first and second centuries became titled dignitaries,—bishops, archbishops, metropolitans, patriarchs,—a different spirit pervaded the entire ranks of the clergy. In a little time they became as distinguished for pride and carnal ambition as their predecessors had been for humility and deadness to the world.

6. I mention but another advantage of Congregationalism, and that is its adaptedness to an *easy, rapid, and universal diffusion.* The religion of Christ was intended to be the religion of the world; and it was admirably adapted, not only in its inner workings and influence, but in its original outward organization, for this purpose. There was no towering, ambitious hierarchy or gigantic ecclesiastical confederation to be thrust upon the enlightened nations, provoking observation and distrust, but the simplest, plainest, and least objectionable form of organization possible. The silent gathering of believers into little associations, and ordaining teachers over them,—who could object to such a measure, unless his malice was first aroused against the religion itself?

This simple Congregational polity, which was so admirably adapted for diffusion in the primitive age, is equally so at the present time.

And so it will continue to be, until the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters fill the channels of the deep.

Our Congregational missionaries have this advantage now in going forth to the heathen nations. Their church organization is so plain, so simple, so highly spiritual, so little of earth in it and so much of heaven, that it awakens little or no suspicion among heathen nobles and kings. It connects easily, readily, with any existing form of civil government, and is fitted to extend itself and the religion it represents, with the least possible friction or opposition, until the religion of Christ shall be diffused every where, and become the religion of the world.

On the whole, we think the Congregationalists of this country have much reason to be satisfied with that form of church organization and government which was bequeathed to them by their fathers; which, as we have seen, is so consonant with Scripture, and so congenial to the spirit of their civil institutions. Indeed, they have reason to be more than satisfied. It becomes them to be thankful for it, and to rejoice in it. And while they accept it with all thankfulness and joy, they should endeavor to show themselves worthy of their peculiar privileges. They should endeavor to honor their institutions by works of faith and labors of love,— by an example of steadfast obedience and usefulness.

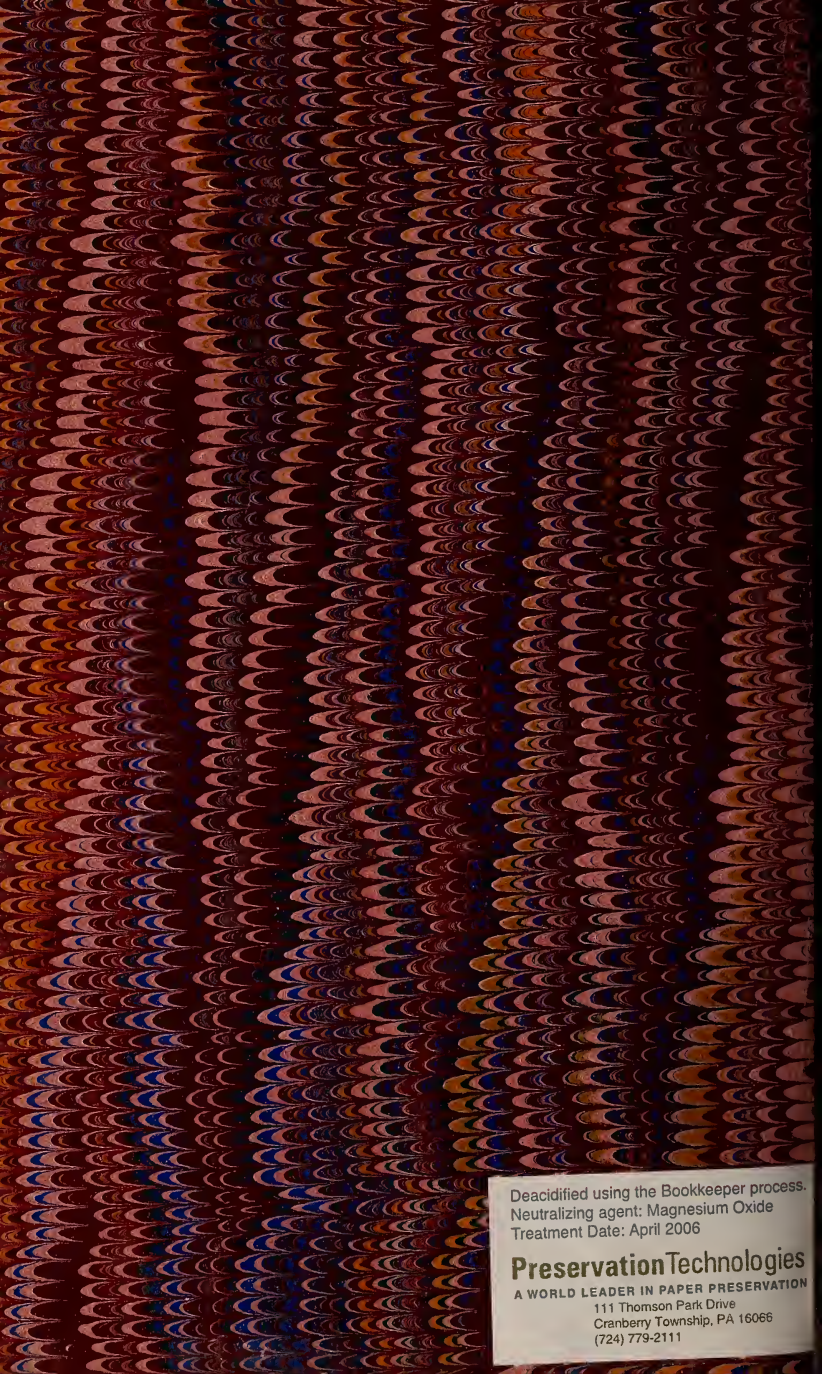
## THIS MANUAL,

By the generosity of friends, will be sold for less than half its cost. A single copy, postage paid, ten cents. Ten copies and over (with postage furnished at the rate of one cent apiece), five cents each.

Address

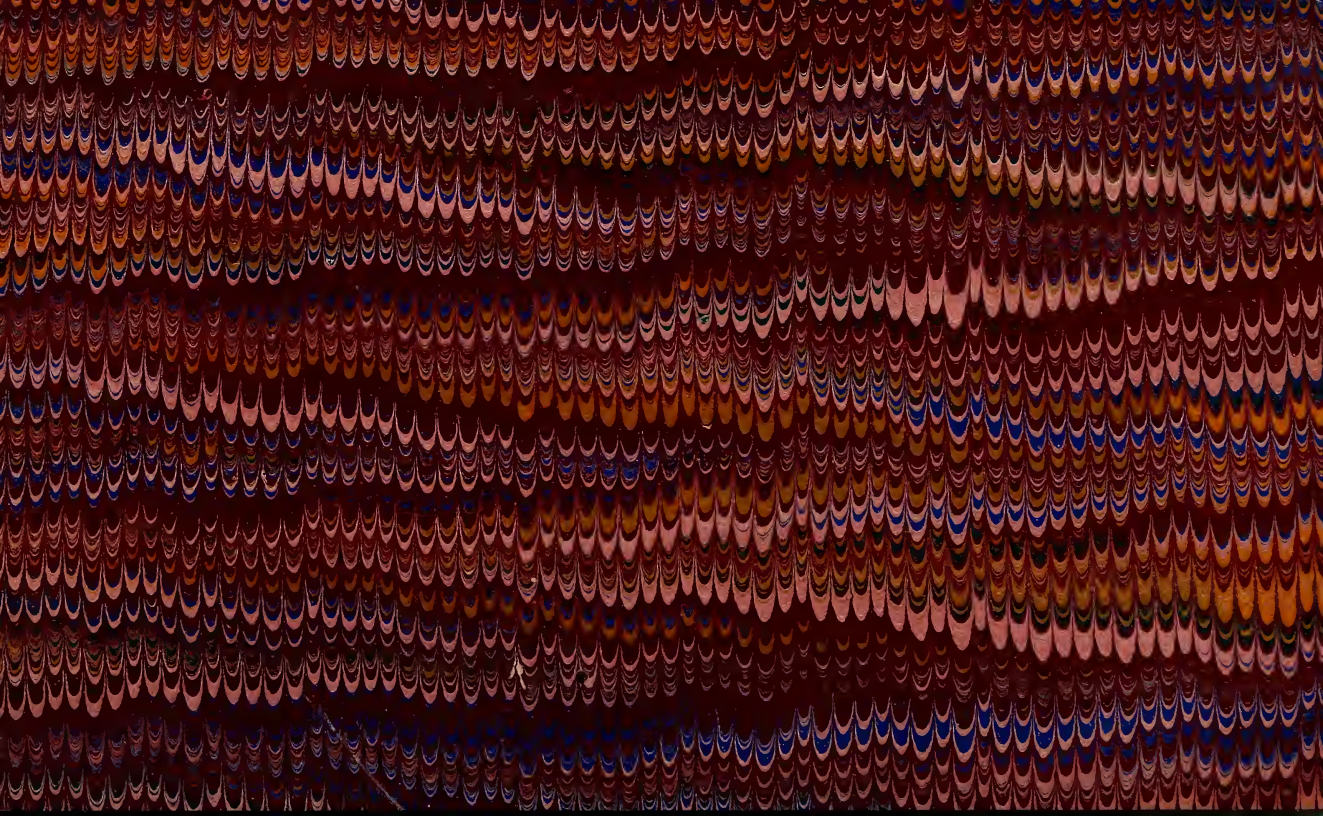
J. E. ROY,
84 WASHINGTON ST., CHICAGO.

BX
7232



Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: April 2006

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 017 524 789 0